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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA'S ANTI-SATELLITE MISSILE TEST,
U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage January 20-22 on the brawl at the Legislative Yuan's final session last Friday, which resulted in failure to pass the FY 2007 budget for the Central Government and other bills; on the debt-ridden Rebar Asia Pacific Group; and on the trial hearing in the Presidential Office Allowance for State Affairs case last Friday. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" discussed China's recent anti-satellite missile test, saying China's move was a military intimidation strategy with the intent of warning Japan and testing the United States' military strength. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" wrote that "it has become clearer that the Chinese military is growing more confident and playing the Pentagon for a pack of fools." An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post," on the other hand, discussed a book by a U.S. professor, Bernard Cole, on Taiwan's security, which talked about Taiwan's soldiers lacking the will to wage a fight in the event of a cross-Straits war. The article said "there are other factors besides over-reliance on American help" behind the declining morale of Taiwan's armed forces. End summary.

12. China's Anti-Satellite Missile Test

A) "[Starting] an Anti-Satellite Missile War, China Publicly Challenges Japan and the United States"

Emerson Chang, the Director of Nan Hua University's, Department of International Studies, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] (1/22):

"What was the real reason behind China's launching a ground-based missile to destroy its weather satellite? Why did Beijing choose to take this internationally controversial military action on January 11? This article believes that this is not a random incident but the execution of a military intimidation strategy with the intention of expressing [China's] strong displeasure over the recent development of the U.S.-Japan military alliance. First, [this incident] is China's counterattack against the U.S.-Japan containment moves. ... Second, since China's diplomatic strategy can hardly stop the recovery of Japan's militarism, it needs to adopt tougher means to warn Japan. ...

"Third, China decided to adopt the means of military coercion so as not be taken as a paper tiger. ... Fourth, [Japanese Prime Minister] Abe is also seeking to strengthen his country's cooperation with NATO in an attempt to play a more important role in global security affairs. Such a move has further threatened China. ... In the face of Japan's hostility, China has no intention of backing off; it acted as planned and used the anti-satellite missile to counterattack Japan's militarism, as symbolized by the latter's move to change the status of its Defense Agency to that of a

cabinet-level Defense Ministry. ...

"This incident [and the other one in which a Chinese attack submarine stalked the USS Kitty Hawk carrier battle group in late October 2006] indicated that China was obviously testing the United States' military strength and its determination. But the U.S. reactions were almost the same; it hesitated over how to respond to China's provocative moves. ... Washington's hesitation will surely encourage [Chinese President] Hu Jintao to resume the path of peaceful rising, and he will put his emphasis on rising rather than on peace."

B) "China's Missile Tests the US"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (1/20):

"... The US has been joined by Japan, Australia and other countries in demanding some form of accountability from the Chinese for their extraordinary behavior, but regardless of how Beijing responds, this incident demolishes the suggestion that the Chinese military and its Communist Party bosses can behave in an accountable, let alone responsible, manner in military and space affairs. In the wake of the North Korean nuclear test, this missile test suggests that Beijing has, if anything, taken on Pyongyang as a role model. ...

"In tandem with this, it has become clearer that the Chinese military is growing more confident and playing the Pentagon for a pack of fools. It defies common sense that the Chinese could launch this missile without informing Washington and international scientific organizations beforehand, yet this is just what appears to have happened. Almost as worrying as the missile test is the fact that the Bush administration sat on the news of this development for a week before bringing it to public attention. Washington's delay suggests that it has frighteningly little comprehension of the need for an immediate and unequivocal response

- if not retaliation - over Beijing's misuse of space technology and its ramping up of military tensions in what is already a tense region.

"The theory that the Middle East quagmire is compromising the security interests of the US by giving the Chinese diplomatic room to maneuver and allowing it to expand its military capabilities with impunity is gaining more currency. Of greatest concern for Taiwan, therefore, is the possibility that the US government's ability to retaliate against symbolic and technical advances in China's military capabilities has been dulled. The US State Department, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in particular, must denounce the

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Chinese launch in the strongest terms and prepare a practical response if they are to be taken seriously in the region. Tongue-clucking and muted expressions of regret from the State Department will not wash. The Chinese can destroy satellites from ground-based missiles and they want the world to know it. Beijing must be made to understand that responsible nations will not tolerate the direction in which it has chosen to travel."

13. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

"Factors Behind Declining Morale in Our Armed Forces"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (1/21):

"... It is most amazing that our American friends have trouble understanding delays in the process of approving arms budgets, since the U.S. Congress is notorious for doing exactly the same thing year after year. While the Bush administration's proposed arms purchase package has indeed been delayed in our Legislature for six years, it is common for weapons systems budgets to get delayed in the U.S. Congress for much longer. While we accept criticism from our American friends, who after all are only concerned about maintaining our security, we do wish that they would spend less time listening to each other inside the Washington Beltway and more time thinking about the implications of what they say.

"We can hardly imagine that there is any country in the world, perhaps except for Israel, that can stay in a state of perpetual readiness for the outbreak of war. While there are surely problems with morale in our armed forces, there are other factors besides over reliance on American help for these problems. For example, President Chen Shui-bian's administration has fomented widespread discontent among officers of the arms forces by reducing retirement budgets and cronyism in promotions. And while the former goal of 'recovering' mainland China from the communists has been abandoned, the new government has yet to lay out a goal that all members of the armed forces, regardless of party affiliation, can rally around."

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